THE
CATHOLIC RADICAL

"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed." Peter Maurin

June/July 2012 ***Price: For whatever it's worth.***

The Naïveté of Militarists

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

Reinhold Niebuhr, one of the most influential Christian theologians of the twentieth century, criticized pacifism as a utopian philosophy which failed to take into account the reality of human sinfulness. DuringWorld War II, Niebuhr agreed with George Orwell's assessment, "Pacifism is objectively pro-fascist. This is elementary common sense." Although Niebuhr died in 1971, he continues to be cited by religious apologists for war like Michael Novak and George Weigel. These "theo-cons" love to dismiss pacifists as sentimental fools or appeasers of evil-doers.

In my early days as a peace activist, during the Iranian hostage crisis of 1979, I remember pacifism being dismissed as ridiculous, while military intervention was championed as intelligent, strong, and certain to achieve positive goals. In fact, in the lead up to each successive war since then, I have heard militarists make similarly confident arguments with equally optimistic timetables for victory. President Bush himself proclaimed, "Mission Accomplished" in Iraq only months into a war that dragged on for nine years. Perhaps Americans would not have been so eager to roll out the flags and yellow ribbons if President Bush had said at the outset, "Give me 1.6 trillion dollars to kill a half million people, 6,397 of them American, in order to empower corrupt anti-American governments in Iraq and Afghanistan."

Unfortunately those who make realistic forecasts about war are dismissed. Lawrence Lindsay, the Bush economic aide who predicted in 2002 that the Iraq War would cost $200 billion a year, was fired. His replacement estimated a total war cost of $50-80 billion. Vice President Dick Cheney assured Americans that the war would cost no more than $100 billion and last no longer than two years.

Tomi Ungerer

When I was fifteen, my grandfather gave me his World War I medal. The front depicts an angel with a sword. The reverse has the heading "The Great War for Civilization," under which is listed the allied nations, including Japan and Italy, American enemies a generation later. The medal's martial/religious art and pretension of global consensus for a "war to end all wars" struck me, even then, as preposterous.

Occasionally though, even militarists are shocked by war. No one feels good about the Abu Graib torture photos or the story of US troops urinating on dead Afghans, but those incidents are usually dismissed as aberrations, the actions of rogue elements and bad apples, certainly not indicative of the military as a whole. Unfortunately, we cannot be sure about this. The vast majority of photos taken in the Abu Graib prison are still being kept from the public by the Obama administration, ostensibly because they are even more shocking than those already leaked. News of massacred civilians is suppressed by the military whenever possible. The kill-

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Catholics teach *that*?

Editor's Note: Aside from the Church's opposition to abortion, contraception, and gay marriage, Catholic Social Teaching is largely a well-kept secret, seldom preached from any pulpit. To dispel some of that ignorance, we offer the following excerpts from the website of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Deficit Reduction

A central moral measure of any budget proposal is how it affects "**the least of these**" (Matthew 25). The needs of those who are hungry and homeless, without work or in poverty should come first.

...A just framework also requires shared sacrifice by all, including raising adequate revenues, eliminating unnecessary military and other spending, and addressing the long-term costs of health insurance and retirement programs fairly.... At a time of record foreclosures, increasing poverty, and high unemployment it is not justifiable to weaken the national safety net or to make disproportionate cuts to programs that can help low and moderate income families avert crisis and live in dignity.... The moral measure of this historic process is not which party wins or which powerful interests prevail, but rather how the jobless, hungry, homeless, and poor are treated....

Immigration Reform

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops opposes "enforcement only" immigration policies and supports comprehensive immigration reform [including]:

...An earned legalization program that would allow foreign nationals of good moral character who are living in the United States to apply to adjust their status to obtain lawful permanent residence,

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Militarists

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ing of hundreds of women and chilren in My Lai during the Vietnam War only came to light a year after it happened, in the face of vigorous efforts by the military to keep it secret. The truth is we have no idea how common atrocities are in war. We do know, however, the quintessential just war, against Germany, Japan, and Italy, ended in Allied mass murder of civilians via unprecedented bombing. In response to the 9/11 attacks, which took 2,977 lives, the US went to war against Afghanistan and Iraq, taking the lives of hundreds of thousands of civilians. On November 1, 2001, *The Boston Globe* reported that the US "carpet bombed" Kandahar, Afghanistan's second largest city, causing the largest "firestorm" since World War II. When asked why this was done, US Secretary of War Donald Rumsfeld said we did this "to terrorize our enemies into submission." In response to terrorism, we had become terrorists, a transformation that continues to cost us in Afghanistan and around the world. War is not restricted to the killing of evil doers. It inevitably harms the innocent.

Two hundred years ago, when Napoleon invaded Spain, he told his troops that they were bringing the Enlightenment to people oppressed by a decadent monarchy. When the French met Spanish resistance, liberation devolved into occupation and finally into war. Francisco de Goya, in his series *The Disasters of War*, captured many of the Abu Graib incidents of his day. In his most famous painting, *The Third of May*, Goya depicted French soldiers executing hundreds of civilians, including a central character who bears the signs of the crucified Christ. Nobility devolved into depravity and unspeakable violence.

Not only do militarists paint rosy pictures of war, they also accuse pacifists of underestimating the evil of human violence. This is ironic since pacifists have been ridiculed, beaten, jailed, or executed for their beliefs. Many of them practice nonviolence in hemorrhaging ghettoes and war zones. Pacifists know full well the extent of human evil, but they reject the fiction that sin can be dispelled by sin. They look for effective ways to build peace while defending human beings from harm. They will put themselves in harm's way if nothing else can stay the hand of war and its apologists. Their efforts are also validated statistically. A 2011 study

"Los desastres de la guerra" by Francisco Goya, 1863

of terrorist groups, guerrilla movements, and nonviolent resistance movements found that "nonviolent resistance movements have achieved partial or full success nearly 90% of the time, compared to 50% for guerilla warfare... and only 7% for terrorism." Nonviolent resistance has fewer civilian casualties and greater success than war. This is not left-wing rhetoric, but verifiable fact.

In the article "Niebuhr, Pacifism, Realism, Peacebuilding," (*Time Magazine,* April 28, 2009), Nathan Schnieder said, "The trouble with Niehbur's realism is its tendency toward fatalism....The nihilistic bombing raids that Allied bombers exacted on Germany and Japan reveal how complacency about the inevitability of war can easily slide into unbelievable brutality. And, immediately after, the reckless escalation of military industry in the Cold War only narrowly escaped self-immolation and delivered a condition of permanent, addictive militarism on the economy of the United States."

We need not wait for another American sniper to murder Afghan families in their sleep to conclude that militarists are out of touch with reality. "Realists," like Niebuhr, Novak, and Weigel, gave their blessings to war and unleashed nightmares that worsened over time, blurring the distinction between civilians and combatants.

Jesus spelled out the consequence of violence when He told Saint Peter, "**Put away your sword. Those who live by the sword will die by the sword.**" And then Christ inspired us to embrace nonviolence when He refused to call down "**fire from Heaven**" to save Himself from death. But, most importantly, the Prince of Peace gave us confidence that nonviolence will prevail when He conquered death on Easter Sunday. Not all pacifists are Christians, to be sure, but the words and example of Jesus are powerful arguments for millions. It's long past time to recognize the naïveté of militarists and to get busy building real and lasting peace. Ω

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Founded in 1933, The Catholic Worker is a lay movement serving the poor while denouncing injustice and proclaiming peace. We are not tax exempt. We rely entirely on the generosity of our supporters to meet our expenses. We welcome volunteers, letters, poetry, articles, artwork, and donations.

Fasting for Economic Justice

by Hunter Link

On February 18, the Living Wage Campaign at the University of Virginia (U.Va.) in Charlottesville declared a hunger strike in order to urge U.Va. President Teresa Sullivan to adopt a living wage policy for all U.Va. employees. This policy would ensure that all employees, some making $7.50 an hour, would be paid $13.00 an hour, a wage that would allow families to cover basic costs of living. I, a recent graduate, and at least 12 other students went 13 days without food during the strike. We concluded the strike before a living wage was implemented, but the momentum generated by our recent action has encouraged us to believe that new victories are just around the corner.

Why a hunger strike? The stark and brutal reality is that U.Va.'s lowest wage earners are not paid enough to cover basic bills. Many people working full-time at U.Va. are forced to take second jobs, rely on food stamps, safety nets, or simply make choices between spending time with children and putting food on the table. The situation is even worse for contract workers. Over the last decade or so, the university has increasingly relied on private contractors to fulfill key service functions, including dining services and cleaning. These employees, who not too long ago were receiving benefits and vacation time, are now doing the same jobs for less money and no benefits.

U.Va. has more than enough money to pay decent wages. When we consider that U.Va. has an endowment of over $5 billion dollars (up over 20% from last year, making it one of the most financially sound universities in the country) and that it employs six of the top ten highest-paid Virginia state employees (including President Sullivan, who makes over $500,000/year), it becomes apparent that this is not a matter of money. It is a matter of willpower. U.Va., a school built by slaves and one of the last institutions to integrate, still has a long ways to go.

After years of organizing, marches, petitions, meetings, civil disobedience, and dialogues, it was clear that stronger measures were needed. Personally, my decision to hunger strike came from the realization that drastic changes in our society requires drastic action. Hunger strikes and fasts are well-known examples of non-violent direct action, and in fact are actions as old as Christianity itself. Saint Luke tells us that immediately prior to announcing His earthly mission, Jesus fasted for forty days in the desert. Only then did He return and, quoting Isaiah, told His audience that He had come to "**proclaim good news to the poor**" (Lk 4:18). After His fast, Jesus unambiguously tells us that economic justice is central to the Gospel message. The specific issue of a living wage is clearly and repeatedly supported in Catholic Social Teaching. (Read any papal encyclical since *Rerum Nevarum* in 1891.) I have been even more convicted to organize with the campaign because President Sullivan is a practicing Catholic. I prayed that our action would awaken her conscience and embolden her to live out her faith. I prayed that she would find the moral courage to center her efforts more on Christ.

"Solidarity" by Käthe Kollwitz

We concluded the strike on day 13, before a comprehensive living wage policy was instituted. Multiple meetings yielded no concrete results, only lukewarm and non-binding "commitments" and long litanies of the reasons why the university could not pay a living wage.

Yet, we did not see this as a defeat. On the contrary, the outpouring of student, faculty, employee, and community support convinced us that people were ready to continue to pressure the administration for change. We attracted national attention, even drawing support from the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). One of the largest and unforeseen victories was that the SEIU, impressed by our action, has begun to work with us to unionize U.Va.'s workforce. The main weakness of a student-driven campaign like this one is that many of the most vulnerable members of the community, i.e. low-wage employees, do not feel safe speaking for themselves. While students can do their best to bring the plight of these employees to light, it is always more powerful and truth-giving for the exploited populations to speak for themselves. Hopefully, a strong union presence will address this. Far from being a loss for the campaign, then, the hunger strike has created new opportunities. The Spirit moves in mysterious ways!

U.Va. employees do not have a living wage...yet. This hunger strike was just one step in a larger movement, a broad history of actions, all propelling us forward. I have faith that we can continue organizing to make our structures and systems ones that prioritize human needs. Please keep the campaign in your prayers. Ω

Editor's Note: Hunter Link is a member of Casa Alma, the Charlottesville Catholic Worker. For more information about the Campaign for a Living Wage go to: www.livingwageatuva.org.

Teachings

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[and] a worker program to permit foreign-born workers to enter the country safely and legally.... Any program should include workplace protections, living wage levels, safeguards against the displacement of US workers, and family unity.... The antidote to the problem of illegal immigration is sustainable economic development in sending countries.

Torture

Prisoner mistreatment compromises human dignity. A respect for the dignity of every person, ally or enemy, must serve as the foundation of security, justice, and peace. There can be no compromise on the moral imperative to protect the basic human rights of any individual incarcerated for any reason.... In a time of terrorism and fear, our individual and collective obligations to respect dignity and human rights, even of our worst enemies, gains added importance....

Labor Unions

"Through the combination of social and economic change, trade union organizations experience greater difficulty in carrying out their task of representing the interests of workers, partly because governments, for reasons of economic utility, often limit the freedom or the negotiating capacity of labour unions.... The repeated calls issued within the Church's social doctrine, beginning with *Rerum Novarum*, for the promotion of workers' associations that can defend their rights must therefore be honoured today even more than in the past, as a prompt and far-sighted response to the urgent need for new forms of cooperation at the international level, as well as the local level." — Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, 2009.

Gun Control

We support the development of a coherent national handgun policy that includes a several day cooling-off period between the sale and possession; a ban on 'Saturday Night Specials'; the registration of handguns; the licensing of handgun owners; and more effective controls regulating the manufacture, sale, and importation of handguns. We recognize, however, that these individual steps will not completely eliminate the abuse of handguns. We believe that only prohibition of the importation, manufacture, sale, and possession of handguns (with reasonable exceptions made for the police, military, security guards, and pistol clubs where guns would have to be kept on the premises under secure conditions) will provide a comprehensive response to handgun violence.

The International Debt Crisis

"**At the end of every seven-year period you shall have a relaxation of debts**..." Deuteronomy 15. ...The problem of foreign debt is not only or even primarily economic; rather, it is a human problem for it leads to an ever-greater impoverishment and blocks the development and slows the

advancement of those who are poorest. We ask ourselves whether the debt is valid, when paying it seriously jeopardizes the survival of our peoples, when the population was not consulted before contracting the debt, and when it has not always been used for lawful purposes.

Death Penalty

Christians are called to cooperate for the defense of human rights and the abolition of the death penalty, torture, inhuman or degrading treatment. These practices are grave crimes against the human person created in the image of God and a scandal for the human family.... The dignity of human life must never be taken away, even in the case of someone who has done great evil. Modern society has the means of protecting itself, without definitively denying criminals the chance to reform.

Soldiers

Every member of the armed forces is morally obliged to resist orders that call for perpetrating crimes against the law of nations and the universal principles of this law. Military personnel remain fully responsible for the acts they commit in violation of the rights of individuals and peoples, or of the norms of international humanitarian law. Such acts cannot be justified by claiming obedience to the orders of superiors.

Global Warming

The report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a synthesis of scientific findings in over 100 countries, including the United States, found that "the warming of the climate is unequivocal".... The bishops and other leaders of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment outlined in a letter to Congress broad agreement on four key principles: 1) The consequences of climate change will be borne by the world's most vulnerable people and inaction will only worsen their suffering. 2) Policies addressing global climate change should enhance rather than diminish the economic situation of people in poverty. 3) Policies should help vulnerable populations here and abroad adapt to climate impacts and actively participate in these efforts. 4) Finally, the "practice of prudence," which often restrains us from acting in haste, in this case "requires us to act with urgency."

Nuclear Weapons

The readiness of the United States to use nuclear weapons, especially against non-nuclear threats, and the potential development of new weapons should be opposed.... It is past time for the US to commit never to use nuclear weapons first and to reject use of nuclear weapons to deter non-nuclear threats. The bishops abhor any use of nuclear weapons.

Landmines

With the Holy See, the USCCB supports securing a US commitment to sign the Mine Ban Treaty to eliminate the scourge of these morally unacceptable weapons that do not distinguish between soldiers and civilians or between times of war and times of peace. Ω

Eliza K. Jewett

Mourning Cloak butterfly,
Nymphalis antiopa

Put on the Morning

by David Williams

A mourning cloak lights
on my daughter's shoulder
and rests in the shade of her hair.
A red like old blood
emerges through dark wings
bordered by gems
blue as the earth
from space—unbearable weight
except for the gold edge.
It radiates into flight.

Is this butterfly
simpler for her,
more luminous?
She holds herself
balanced in magic,
stance calm,
arms bracing
each other, asks
how many minutes
the morning coat stays.
Then patiently waits
for next time. Knows
the place. Forgets
what she calls it.
I'll have to remember

when she cries out before
night is flush with dawn,
awakened by a terror
unnamed in old blood,
and drifts back surrounded
by blue planets lifted
on dark-borne, flickering gold. Ω

Ten Years of Peace Vigiling

by Michael True

"Don't you have anything better to do?," drivers occasionally shout at us, as they try to make the green light at Highland and Worcester Center Boulevard. Others acknowledge us and our signs "Bring the Troops Home;" "Afghanistan: Graveyard of Empires;" "Peace Now!"

It all began a decade ago, when we gathered at Lincoln Square to protest the bombing of Afghansitan, and later, the trumped-up war on Iraq. Even then, few people responded negatively. More often, they shouted or waved encouragement.

The participants number only four or five, maybe twenty or forty in times of crisis. It's a modest protest, sponsored by Worcester Friends Meeting (Quakers) and Saints Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker.

Our reasons for speaking out range from grandiose to ordinary.

- To try to stop the killing.
- To remind ourselves and others that young Americans are sent to die and kill without purpose.
- To resist military interventions, torture, and miscarriages of justice upheld by the highest courts.
- To encourage peacemaking in families, neighborhoods, schools, nationally and internationally.
- To spend an hour with fellow peacemakers.

Whether our challenge to the violence of the *status quo* is useful is for others to say.

Judging by their indifference or unwillingness to participate, most people may regard our weekly vigil as pointless or naive.

We expect no dramatic change. Living in the most destructive, and "hence the most stupid period in the history of our species," as Wendell Berry says, we have little hope of immediate success.

As an antidote to despair, the protest speaks for thousands of innocent victims whose voices are unheard. Our hope is that it preserves qualities of heart and spirit that would be destroyed by silence.

Standing there helps one sustain a sense of reality as citizens of a war-making state. "To whom can we pledge allegiance," as the poet Stanley Kunitz said, "except to the victims?" Ω

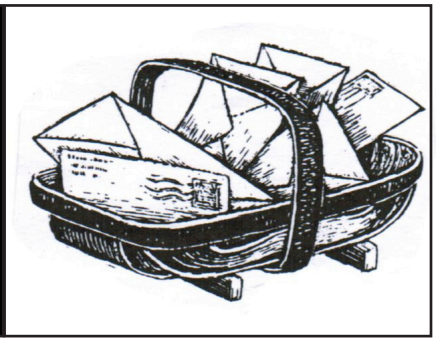
Aiden Duffy

Editor's Note: Everyone is welcome to join the weekly vigil at Lincoln Square on Tuesday afternoons from 4 until 5. For more information, call 508 753-3588.

Green Energy

Five years after NSTAR became the first Massachusetts utility to allow customers to buy electricity generated by wind, less than 1 percent of the company's nearly 900,000 customers have enrolled. Ed Loechler, an activist from Brookline and biology professor at Boston University, has been going door to door to persuade people to put their money where their environmental ideals might be. He says, "This is the single, simplest way you could cut a lot of carbon dioxide from your household," Even in these difficult economic times, we urge our readers to join NSTAR Green to help reverse global warming. Ω

Letters



Dear Scott, A terrific article!
A couple of things you might find interesting (maybe you already know them, and left them out of the article because space was wanting, but just in case): 1) Orwell later recanted that famous statement of his, that pacifism was objectively pro-fascist — he criticized his use both of "fascist" and of "objectively." Most people who quote the phrase don't know, or don't want to know, about the recantation. 2) There's a really interesting study of Niebuhr by a peace historian named Leilah Danielson — she points out that by the end of his life, Niebuhr was advocating a pre-emptive nuclear strike on the Soviet Union . . . . (I could dig up the reference if you were interested. 3) I'm guessing the 2011 study you quote is Erica Chenoweth's "Why Civil Resistance Works". Erica's a fascinating person, the more so because she didn't start out wanting to make a case for nonviolent resistance — she's a security specialist with an interest in terrorism, a hard-core number cruncher, and she was just curious about success rates. But then the evidence started to come in!

All the best, and how was the Boston Marathon?

Prof. Larry Rosenwald
Wellesly College
Wellesley, Massachusetts

t the Main Street Y, I picked up a copy of your April/May *Catholic Radical* and enjoyed very much its contents.

I am still pretty much on the same wave length as you and Claire and I applaud your sincere and fervent devotion to social justice, and am enclosing a modest check to help support your good works.

Why the anti-abortion people are so down on Planned Parenthood is puzzling. I understand that PP's support of birth control is 97% of its work. If birth control prevents pregnancy, then abortion is also prevented, so why fight contraception? Outlawing abortion would only result in black market, back alley abortions and the death of many desperate women.

While the Israeli building on the West Bank is unfair and the cause of suffering, the continuous shelling of Israel from Gaza is destruction of human life. When will the Arabs recognize the Jews' right to life? Oh, well... keep up the good fight....
Cordially,

Jerry Teran
Worcester, Massachusetts

Editor's Note: The Catholic Worker opposes violence against all parties and by all parties, but we also subscribe to Pope Paul VI's adage, "If you want peace, work for justice." We believe that only equal rights for everyone, regardless of religion and ethnicity, in historic Palestine will sow lasting seeds of peace.

According to Wikipedia, 35% of Planned Parenthood's services are contraception and 3% are abortion. Opponents of abortion focus on it because it is the nation's single largest provider of abortion, about 300,000 a year. Planned Parenthood also makes about 1,500 referrals for adoption annually.

Dear Scott, Claire, family, community members, guests, and friends,
Thanks for your April/May *Catholic Radical*. I liked your article "Catholic Myopia," Scott. It's a good idea to put everything in perspective, and allot our energies to the issues with higher priority. It does surprise me how inconsistent we humans generally are re: right-wing interest in anti-abortion laws, etc., but gung-ho about war, or left-wing peace activists all for abortion.

Gosh, Claire, I'm amazed your interviewers at the Bahrain airport didn't just search your backpack and take those names and addresses of contacts in Bahrain. I've had that done to me just to enter the U.K!! Good on you for attempting to get in.

I loved the mental picture David [Maher] gives of waking up to the call of coffee, from having slept outdoors [in the Israeli-occupied West Bank]. The house demolitions must be so disheartening. ...Thanks for the reminders you print of the struggles of people around the globe. It can be so easy to forget about the plight of others.

John Wallace's account of the prison fire in Comayagua [Honduras] was really horrific. So many countries and the people's struggles have made it into your pages. I love the broadness of your focus. I liked your optimism that shines through in the "Mason Street Musings," Claire.... Thanks for shining the light,

Sheri Ellery
Whirinaki, New Zealand

Dear Claire and Scott,
Thanks so much for the article "Catholic Myopia" in the latest issue of *Catholic Radical*, Scott. You said what really needed to be said and what I really needed to hear. Something has always bothered me about the tenacity of certain pro-life advocates. My sister-in-law is one of them. She regularly vigils outside Planned Parenthood in Providence. The other day we got in to an argument about the Obama dictate when she said Catholic institutions must reject his proposal because it would be "cooperating with evil." I said, "Isn't sponsoring ROTC programs and taking money from the Defense Department cooperating with evil?" She said, "War is different from abortion. Abortion is the intentional killing of innocent life." So I said, "So the intentional killing of the bad guys is OK? Where does Jesus sanction that in the Gospel?"

As usual, my arguments with my sister-in-law do nothing but get us both frustrated. However, I guess by Lenten grace, I realized that it would serve the gospel of love much better if, when I'm talking to someone whose viewpoint is very different and intransigent, I resolve to be a very good listener so I can truly understand where they are coming from and just be patient waiting for "empathic breakthrough"!

Claire, your account of your trip to Bahrain, or more precisely, your description of the discernment process you went through leading up to it, was very inspiring to me. One can become dissipated

very quickly with "empathic overload". It is important to allow God to put the rope around us and take us, as the Gospel says, "**where you do not want to go**." Maybe not so much do not want to go, but rather, "how can this be done?" Your account jived with an eight-week Ignatian prayer group I just joined where the emphasis is on deepening trust that God speaks to each of us *personally*. We can derive confidence and courage from that in our prayerful discernment to follow what God is creating us to be.

I'm always trying to "fit in" acting on my conscience as I remain obligated (by choice) to work the so-called 40-hour work week. One must never exclude any possibilities. If God wants you to do something, it will get done. I recently marched in the Veterans for Peace [alternative Saint Patrick's Day] parade in South Boston, and it reinforced what you mentioned in "Mason Street Musings": "...the gloriously wide network of peace and justice campaigns...." It was energizing to connect with many old friends and to make many new ones that day.

Again, thanks for the down-to-earth account. Peace.

Paul McNeil
Spencer, Massachusetts

Dear Scott & Claire,
...Claire, I am gladdened by your refreshed and sustained hope, as stated in "Mason Street Musings," such a **beautiful** piece of writing. And I appreciate "Entry Denied," too. Living by the heart instead of the head is what brings the greatest and most "moving" waves in life.

"When we experience heart-felt emotions like love, care, appreciation, and compassion, the heart produces coherent or smooth rhythms that enhance communication between the heart and brain, helping us to think clearer and recall information." Doc Childre (www.HeartMath.org)

As I learned from reading about HeartMath research, the heart generates by far the most powerful and most extensive rhythmic electromagnetic field produced in the body. The electrical voltage produced by the heart is 60 times greater than that of the brain, and the heart's magnetic component (wouldn't you know it?) is about 5,000 times stronger than that produced by the brain, and can be detected from several feet away from the body (as opposed to the brain's magnetic field emanating only inches from the body). Now we can understand the aura that was seen and felt around Jesus and Buddha and Saint Francis and the likes. So, Claire, your trip to Bahrain may have been aborted, but you have given birth to something huge.

Scott, your article "Catholic Myopia" brilliantly exposes the misguided thrust of the Church from the top and gives light to the importance of, not so much what is said in Mass, but what is carried in the hearts of the masses: you and I, and all those individual hearts being, as you say, invited "to holiness" and spreading the word and embodying the truth in their actions. What a fantastic expository piece. Thank you. I was so moved that I wrote a letter to the pastor of the local Catholic church. He is young and might not yet be fossilized (too far removed from the blood, marrow, and spirit of the teachings). I remember the movie "Brother Sun and Sister Moon" about Saint Francis and Saint Clare, when Saint Francis appeals to the Pope for support of his church. The Pope was humiliated (shamed), tears in his eyes. He saw Saint Francis for who he was and what he truly represented, and realized he (the Pope) had been far astray from all that....

Keep hearts open, hopes up, and passion lit.

Phil Milgrom
Warren, Massachusetts

Hi Scott,
I just received the newsletter and started off by reading your article. It was great! It made me reflect on how little all Protestant churches are doing to stand against the war and abortion. Also, almost nothing to serve the poor.

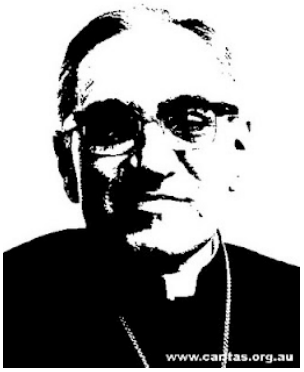
Axel Cruz
Worcester, Massachusetts

Editor's Note: The author is a member

Catholic Worker Calendar

Hope is not resignation; it is a commitment to continue to struggle even when things seem to warrant surrender. When hope flares, it allows human beings to overcome monstrous difficulties. It allows people to defy common sense and confound strategists. Hope experienced in the extreme, like faith and love, is miraculous.

- Archbishop Oscar Romero



June 6 — Romero: Please join us for the extraordinary 1989 film starring Raul Julia, which tells the story of Oscar Romero, a shy and conservative priest who was named archbishop and became an outspoken champion of justice for the poor and opponent of tyrannical repression in El Salvador. 7 P.M.. 52 Mason Street. Refreshments will be provided.

June 11 & 25 July 16 — Mass: Please join us in Eucharistic prayer and song. 7:30 P.M.. 52 Mason Street. Refreshments to follow.

June 3 — The Worcester Marathon: Watch Scott try, once again, to run 26.2 miles under 3:35.

For more information, call: 508 753-3588

Mason Street Musings

Spring has finally come. Our ancient maple tree, its canopy thick with leaves, no longer casts a lacey shadow. The neighbors have returned to their porches. I hear them call out to passers-by as I sit in the yard to write. With every subtle breeze, the maple dribbles bright green seeds onto my blank page. Shaped like miniature angel wings, they are a colorful distraction.

Across the street, Reverend Dyer sits in an old, white Hyundai and listens to a recording of his Sunday sermon played at full volume. The bass vibrates with lots of "Alleluias!" and calls to "Give Gawd the glory." At 86, Reverend Dyer possesses a vigorous faith and is among the most Christian men I know.

Come summer, the store-front preachers of Chandler Street will pour out into the parking lots, portable sound systems in hand, to broadcast sermons on immediate salvation. Women will stand in the shade of a small white tent and sing. A man will twang an electric guitar, and invariably someone will thump on snare drums. I love these sidewalk revivals which remind me of the ever-clanging temple bells of India, God beckoning amid the din of the day.

In the kitchen, Scott prepares supper for our crowded table. The house is full of guests right now. Here at the Catholic Worker, we preach hospitality as a means for encountering Christ. That is the best part of the story. Elbow-to-elbow dining is not always pleasurable. The eating habits of some can turn your stomach, and my scolding ways have been known to cast a pall on our communal suppers.

But tonight we are happy. M. received her Massachusetts driver's license in today's mail. The license represents a significant achievement for her, a woman from a poor state in Ghana who never learned to drive. Alone in the US, she relied on one of her countrymen to transport her to work and school. The man abused her and fathered her only child. With the license, she won't be so vulnerable. She can even consider working outside the city, away from her tormentor.

Sarah Young

J. also brings good news. Two dispiriting months of searching for work have finally landed him a job as a machinist. After supper, he offers Dave and me a brand new bike helmet, a free perk from his health insurance company that he ordered for us. I will think of J. with gratitude as I pedal past the street preachers this summer.

I am reading an absorbing new account of the May 1968 draft file burnings by the Catonsville Nine. The book records a time when American peacemakers seemed to give themselves wholeheartedly to the cause of social justice and stopping the Vietnam War. Our life on Mason Street appears mundane by comparison. We could always be more revolutionary.

This fall, we plan to host a mini-series on Catholic Social teaching. Until then, I remain fixated on improving our squatters' garden. The to-do list is long: Mend fence. Build tool shed. Install chicken coop. Getting a few "layers" is the next step in developing our backyard micro farm. If you are a carpenter or gardener, consider joining us for an afternoon. As we hammer and plant, we'll plot how to create a society where it is easier for people to be good.

Thanks to all who contributed toward our electrical project. We now have enough funds to rewire a few rooms. Last week, both of our cars died. Repairing them depleted our cash for daily needs, so once again we beg for your contributions. It takes a chunk of change to keep this old house functional. Please continue to keep our work in your prayers. And in all your summer doings, don't forget to "give God the glory." Ω

Claire

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